

Part Forty-Two

DESCENTION OF RADHA KRISHNA TO GOLAK DHAM BRINDABAN

Eighty-Seventh Chapter

INTIMATE TALK BETWEEN KRISHNA AND RADHA AT NIGHT



Intimate talk between Krishna and Radha

As evening began to fall, ShreeGovind came to see his father at his quarters and had a chit-chat for a while. Then he went to Yashoda's room, where he ate *Nani-makhan*. As it was getting late at night, he got up from his *asand* [chair] and lay on a couch, simulating a sound sleep.

Yashoda has forgotten her hundred years' wretchedness and heartache, now that she was quite content with the fulfilment of her wish to see her son again. Full of motherly love for her Krishna, whom she still considered to be a boy, she also went to sleep soundly.

When his mother was fast asleep, Govind got out of bed and came out stealthily. He was full of *Anurag* [passionate attachment] with Radha. He walked over to Radha's quarters. Radha received him warmly and seated him in a divan. After paying homage she sat down on his left side. Various sakhis, very affectionately served them with *sharbat*. Then, taking note of the time and place, they left them alone.

Krishna held Radha's two hands tightly in his palms. He was very worried that he might lose her again after one hundred years of separation. She was like an apparition, not real. He then made a poignant request with a voice that was delicate and hungry, "Listen my love, and please say yes to what I am going to ask you.

It has been so long since we had played with each other because of what had been ordained by Bidhata. Tonight, we meet again in this glorious Nikunjaban after ages, and I would like to play Ras leela with you tonight. Oh, Radhe, would you not care to fulfil this wish of mine? I am like a flock of hungry birds that drifts soaring languidly in the calm sky."

Radha heard Govind's prayer. She had a frisson of anticipation for it, and it gave her a sense of excitement – something she had not felt for a long time. However, she replied with a gentle and calm voice, "I appreciate the invitation, but I can't commit. I do not know how to say this to you. I had taken an oath a long time ago that, apart from Golak and Braj I will never play Ras leela anywhere in the world."

Krishna entreated, "I know. But this place to me is just like Brindaban. Please stop to consider this. All the sadhus call any place wherever you and I stay together as Braj or Golak. Apart from that, Biswakarma took great care to create the bans and upabans exactly like those in Brindaban.

Radhika answered very politely, "You are right. Wherever I look I see all the flowering plants and trees, flowers and fruits, birds and animals, in the bans and upabans are so like those in Brindaban. But they are not the same.

Sitting on the banks of this Saraswati River reminds me of Jamuna. But it is not Jamuna. The bat tree [banyan tree] that is growing here, is an exact copy of the Banshi bat in Brindaban. [Banshi bat is a Banyan tree in Brindaban under the shade of which Shri Krishna used to play his flute. [It is now the National tree of India].



Banyan Tree (Khongnang pambi in Manipuri).

You and I are also Shyam and Radha of the Braj. All the sakhis are also genuine. Even then, I cannot persuade myself to take this place as authentic Braj. Please do not be offended that I am unable to comply with your request though it is something I had been greedily awaiting so many years. Please allow me to address the conundrum. It is my sincere plea that you please move your residence to Braj and play your leela with me by the Jamuna River, as often as you like."

Knowing Radha's iron will behind her impeccably cuddly exterior, Krishna sadly, changed the subject quickly. He continued with some pleasant conversation without the talk going awry, to while away the rest of the night. Then, with the first flush of the morning, Govind made his way back to Yashoda's room; laid down and slept without anybody knowing about his escapade.

Such was the exotic Krishna leela that, inside the palace, everyone had the feeling that Krishna was with them. Basudev and Devaki also had the same perception that Krishna was around them. Rukmani and other consorts had the same notion that Krishna was with them day and night. All the sakhis had the understanding that Krishna was playing with them. The cows and calves saw him in their cowshed.

While Krishna was busy playing his leela, Nand and Yashoda, elsewhere in the palace, were engaging in an amicable and insightful dialogue with Basudev and Devaki. They recalled some of the best times they spent together in those good old days. Days and nights thus passed quickly.

Nand often made up his mind to return home, but it always fizzled out. It was no different for Basudev and Rukmini. In their love for Krishna, they kept rescheduling their departures. Time was fugitive. In this way, three months passed before anybody realised that they were still at Prabas.

Eighty-Eight Chapter

SATYABHAMA AND RUKMINI HAD A CHANCE TO QUERY KRISHNA

One night, when the moonlight flooded the Prabas valley, Satyabhama Devi with her elder Rukmini Devi, were lying in bed awake, one on each side of Krishna, and as if they had conspired before, they eyed and smiled to each other before they put the question to their Lord.

As the embers of jealousy flared up, Rukmani started the ball rolling, “Please listen to us, Giridhari. We are devoted to you. Hê Murari. Would you be gracious enough to tell us the truth? It is something that we have been meaning to ask you for a very long time.

We know, your animal magnetism can sweep any woman off her feet in the three loks. You are the stealer of women’s hearts, and spoiler of sati dharma but the Vedas and shastras declare that you are immune to such an illusion from women. So, we gained the impression that no one, no woman, in this world could bewitch you.

Nonetheless, we have been hearing something that is quite the contrary. This has been the subject of argument between our ears and eyes, even today. We will tell you all about it and please forgive us if there is any fabrication. If it turns out to be true, kindly grant us to feast our eyes on this lady’s aesthetics and glamour.

We heard that there is a famous woman, known as Radha in Braj, who has no equal in the three loks, in her beauty, charm and deportment. She is reputed to be hugely charismatic and unusually seductive. That is not all. She is so extraordinarily or transcendently monumental that people can talk about her until the hell freezes over. So much so, that she could bewitch someone like you, Govind, who is foolproof to such beguilement. It seems she is an extraordinary lady. We understand she is at Prabas for the yagna.

You my Lord, indeed, fell for her charms and you dedicated everything you had at her feet – your body, soul, and mind, at no cost to her. So said, all the munis and rishis. Pardon us if we are wrong. What’s more amusing is the word going round in the street of Brindaban that, one day, our Lord was thrown out of her house for being late in coming to see her, and for hurting her pride. An outrage for her, we presume. As nothing could console her, our Shree Hari laid his precious headgear and flute at her feet. But that was not enough to placate her angry protest.

So, we heard that, you my lord, went back home, and returned the next day to Radhika’s residence, dressed in the robe of a medicant, begging for alms. It was still inadequate until you declared in writing on a piece of *Das patra*, [piece of Vedic fabric] that you would remain as her faithful servant forever.

We hear that, this lady is staying here in the *upaban* with all her sakhi friends, having come all the way from Braj. We feel that we would be blessed for life if we could have a *darshan* of her and hear her speak. And so, my lord, if you could kindly arrange this meeting, it would be a great honour for us, and we would be proud of your connection.”

Shree Govind smiled and said, “You are right. Radha is the most beautiful woman among those Brahma had created. But I doubt you will be able to see her. It is not that simple. Usually, without her acquiescence normal eyes are barely sufficient to visualise her.”

Hari consoled the two Ranis, saying that he will see what he can do. "We will have a look at her, tomorrow night with me. She will be coming to the bank of Saraswati River. You hide in the forest and have a look at her." Satisfied, the two ladies slept soundly. Krishna tried to sleep, but his brain would not stop talking to itself. He decided to have a word with Lalita.

It is never complete to hear about the leela of Shree Hari Sanatan [eternal], which is full of various Ras [Indian concept of aesthetic flavour]. Listen to it, oh fickle mind, with sincere devotion to him. It is a destructible wealth in your possession.